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## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A related documents processing device comprising:
  - a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
  - a locater locating a timewise latest document
- related to a document selected based on detected relevance information.
  - 2. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
  - 3. The device according to Claim 2, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least a timewise order.
  - 4. The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a display unit for displaying contents of the document located by the locator.
- 5. The device according to Claim 4, wherein the display unit displays the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.
  - 6. The device according to Claim 5, wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at the locator.
  - 7. The device according to Claim 2, wherein the detector

detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

- The device according to Claim 5, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.
- The device according to Claim 1, wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the 15 relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents. 10. The device according to Claim 9, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail document located by the locator is subjected to a return mail processing.
  - 11. A related documents processing device characterized in that it comprises:
    - a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
- a document editor parsing an overlapped portion 25 among related documents based on detected relevance information and for merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated.

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- 12. The device according to Claim 11, wherein the document editor merges the documents according to an order of the related documents.
- 13. The device according to Claim 11, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
  - 14. The device according to Claim 13, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the timewise order.
  - 15. The device according to Claim 11, further comprising a display unit for displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.
  - 16. The device according to Claim 15, wherein the document editor merges documents from a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the
- display unit up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the display unit displays the merged document.
- 17. The device according to Claim 13, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based
  25 on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected

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branched state.

- 18. The device according to Claim 15, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a
- uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.
- 19. The device according to Claim 11, wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.
  - 20. A computer readable recording medium having a program recoded thereon, the program makes a computer function as:
    - a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
    - a locator locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information.
    - 21. The recording medium according to Claim 20, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
- 25 22. The recording medium according to Claim 21, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of

each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

- 23. The recording medium according to Claim 20, wherein the program further makes the computer function as a
- display unit for displaying contents of the document located by the locator.
  - 24. The recording medium according to Claim 23, wherein the display unit displays the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance
- 10 information detected by the detector.
  - 25. The recording medium according to Claim 24, wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at the locator.
- 15 26. The recording medium according to Claim 21, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected 20 branched state.
  - 27. The recording medium according to Claim 24, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected

branched state as a tree view.

- 28. The recording medium according to Claim 20, wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.
- 29. The recording medium according to Claim 28, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail document located by the locator is subjected to a return mail processing.
- 30. A computer readable recording medium having a program recoded thereon, the program making a computer function as:
  - a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
  - a document editor parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated.
  - 31. The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the document editor merges the documents according to an order of the related documents.
- 32. The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
- 33. The recording medium according to Claim 32, wherein
  the detector detects a timewise order of the documents
  based on time information in the header information of
  each of the documents and outputs the relevance

information including at least a timewise order.

- 34. The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the program further makes the computer function as a display unit for displaying the relevance among the
- documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.
  - 35. The recording medium according to Claim 34, wherein the document editor merges documents from a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit and up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the display unit displays the merged document.
- 36. The recording medium according to Claim 32, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.
- 37. The recording medium according to Claim 34, wherein
  the detector detects a branched state between documents
  based on an ID noted in the header information according
  to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs
  the relevance information including at least the detected
  branched state, and the display unit displays the
- relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.
  - 38. The device according to Claim 30, wherein the

documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.

- 39. A method for processing related documents, which comprises:
- a detecting step of detecting relevance among documents; and
- a locating step of locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information.
- 40. The method according to Claim 39, wherein the documents have header information, and the detecting step includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
- 41. The method according to Claim 40, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least a timewise order.
  - 42. The method according to Claim 39, the locating step includes a displaying step of displaying contents of the located document.
- 43. The method according to Claim 43, wherein the
  displaying step includes displaying the relevance among
  the documents as a tree view based on the relevance
  information detected by the detecting step.

- 44. The method according to Claim 43, wherein the locating step includes processing a specific document as the selected document, the specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the displaying step.
- 45. The method according to Claim 40, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.
- detecting step includes a branched state between

  documents based on an ID noted in the header information

  according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents

  and outputting the relevance information including at

  least the detected branched state, and the displaying

  step includes displaying the relevance among the

  documents including the detected branched state as a tree

  view.

46. The method according to Claim 43, wherein the

- 47. The method according to Claim 39, wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detecting step is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.
- 48. The method according to Claim 47, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail document located by the locating step is subjected to a return mail processing.

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- 49. A method for processing related documents which comprises:
- a detecting step of detecting relevance among documents; and
- a merging step of parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated.
- 50. The method according to Claim 49, wherein the merging step includes merging the documents according to an order of the related documents.
  - 51. The method according to Claim 49, wherein the documents have header information, and the detecting step includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.
  - 52. The method according to Claim 51, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the timewise order.
  - 53. The method according to Claim 49, wherein the detecting step including displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the detected relevance information.
  - 54. The method according to Claim 53, wherein the merging step includes merging documents from a document selected

among the documents displayed as a tree view up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the displaying step includes displaying the merged document.

- 55. The method according to Claim 51, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information
- including at least the detected branched state.

  56. The method according to Claim 53, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the
  - including at least the detected branched state, and the displaying step includes displaying the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.
- 57. The method according to Claim 49, wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detecting step is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.